

2. IRAN: ADMIRAL MADANI EMERGES AS AN OPPOSITION LEADER

Admiral Madani has become in recent weeks one of the most prominent and, potentially, most effective of the Iranians opposing the dominant clerical leadership. He is trying to build alliances in preparation for the time when he believes Iran must turn to a strong secular figure. It is unlikely that this activity can continue much longer without strong reaction from the clerical forces.

\*

\*

\*

As Commander of the Navy, Governor of Khuzistan, runner-up in the recent presidential election, and member of parliament, Madani has held key positions throughout the revolutionary period. But since the clericals' victory in the May parliamentary election and the subsequent increasing dominance of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), Madani has been forced to move openly into the opposition.

In that position, Madani has been building links to some of the traditional centers of Iranian political power. In combination, they could one day provide the core of an alternative government. They include the:

- Educated and experienced upper classes: Madani has, according to a clandestine source, had initial contacts with Hassan Nazih, former head of the National Iranian Oil Company and, like Madani, one of the most effective leaders to come out of the Revolution. As a presidential candidate, Madani had considerable support from other Iranians like Nazih.
- Tribes: Madani recently developed contacts with the powerful Qashqai tribe, as well as with other tribes; he may, according to a clandestine source, have recently sought refuge with the Qashqais.
- Navy: Madani is still a respected figure in his former command.
- Minorities: Madani has received aid from some minority religious groups, such as the Jews.

According to a clandestine source, Madani's "front" has avoided establishing links to exiled leaders such as Bakhtiar and Qasbi.

As Madani's opposition role has developed, he has begun to state his views on key issues:

- The basically Islamic nature of the Revolution must be protected.
- The clerics, however, cannot govern Iran; inevitably Iran must turn to "experts" who can do so.
- The IRP is "monopolistic" and so parliament cannot last under its domination.
- The American hostages should be released in exchange for certain US gestures.